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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2655  
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
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RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5080  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2831  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2696  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 3324  
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3462

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SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, EEB, EUR/ACE FOR FISCHER

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TAGS: [EAID](#) [EIND](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN'S STATE TOURISM AND SPORTS COMMITTEE  
ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT DEVELOPING THE SECTOR

[1](#)1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

[1](#)2. (SBU) SUMMARY: Representatives of the State Tourism and Sports Committee said that they are interested in developing Community-Based Tourism (CBT), especially national crafts, higher education for tourism professionals, and some areas that they estimate are ripe for ecotourism. Some donors from Germany and Turkey, as well as regional organizations are already actively working on projects in the tourism sector. Turkmen officials have reacted enthusiastically to the idea of cooperating in this area, but potential partners should listen closely to the Turkmen regarding which projects that they would like to pursue. From past experience, Post knows that Turkmenistan will be determined to work on the President's priorities first and will not be swayed from that. END SUMMARY.

INTEREST IN DEVELOPING NATIONAL CRAFTS, EDUCATION, AND  
NATIONAL PARKS

[1](#)3. (SBU) At a meeting on April 14, representatives of the State Tourism and Sports Committee said that they are interested in engaging in projects with donors to develop Community-Based Tourism (CBT). The officials indicated interest in projects directed towards developing national crafts projects, which they viewed positively because of the possibility to create jobs for residents of the provinces. They also reacted well to the concept of developing tourism-oriented institutions of higher learning. They added that the Ministry of Culture is in charge of educating people how to produce products for sale to tourists, and the State Tourism and Sports Committee has responsibility for showing tourists around the country.

CURRENT PROJECTS IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

[1](#)4. (SBU) The officials said that some European donors and USAID are working with the Ministry of Nature Protection to develop CBT. A German organization called the Sukov Fund (phonetic spelling) is working on national park development. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is working on a CBT project in conjunction with local

organization Gulnahal (Mary province). Turkish development agency TICA offers training in tourism marketing, and internships in Turkey for tourism professionals. Deputy Chairman, Ferhat Arjanov; Chief of International Relations/Marketing and Promotion Department, Abdurakhman Mamedniyazov; Deputy Chief of Tourism Department, Serdar Akiniyazov; and Head Specialist of International Relations/Marketing and Promotion Department, Ayna Karliyeva; represented the State Tourism and Sports Committee. Deputy Rector of the National Institute for Sport and Tourism, Handurdy Ovezov, also attended the meeting.

15. (SBU) COMMENT: It appears that tourism is an area that would have strong possibilities for cooperation, if the right donors were to propose projects that the Turkmen were enthusiastic about. In a rare sincere show of enthusiasm, one official said, "we would really be happy to develop" the tourism sector. The Turkmen were said that many places are ripe for ecotourism, such as a desert area called Repetek, so the key is to identify which locations and topics are priorities for them. From past experience, Post knows that Turkmenistan will work on President Berdimuhamedov's priorities first, and will not be swayed from that. END COMMENT.  
MILES